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SUMMER FOLIAGE
By GEORGE INNESS

Courtesy Macbeth Galleries (All rights reserved)

An Important Exhibition of American Art

By AGNES GERTRUDE RICHARDS

FOLLOWING close upon the last two exhibitions at the Art Institute, the display of American paintings from the Macbeth Galleries of New York, continuing from January the fourth to January twenty-fourth, at the Roullier Galleries, has afforded Chicago an unusual opportunity to study the works of native painters, both present and past. This latter collection, consisting of sixty-seven important canvasses, included examples of Inness, Wyant, Hunt, Homer, Martin and others of the early masters of American art, in addition to a note-worthy showing of co-temporary painters. Among the earlier men were names which we do not so often see on catalogs of present-day exhibitions.

An Inness is always certain of interest, even from the most casual observer, because

it is an Inness, so potent is the magic spell of a great name, even to those who cannot respond to the thrill of a great art. It seems, therefore, appropriate to dwell first upon the example of this master's work included in the collection. *Summer Foliage* belongs to the most interesting period of Inness' career, its poetic tenderness keyed to a somber tone, usual in the earlier school of painting. The dull rich greens of its forest-shaded depths are relieved by no high contrast of light. The grey of a tree trunk and the answering grey of clouds, through the rifts of the dense foliage, are the only contrasting touches of light amid the varying greens of the abundant leaves, and they have more of the quality of harmony than of contrast. While possessing all the peculiar charm of Inness, the picture is not quite



PASSING SHADOWS
By A. H. WYANT

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so wrapt in the haze of a dreamy atmosphere as are most of those in the Butler collection at the Institute, the forms of the trees, leaves and trunks being a bit more sharply defined than in others of his most poetic works.

Next in importance and interest is Wyant's large canvas, *Passing Shadows*, full of the evanescent charm of fleeting shade and tender, subdued light. The dark tones of the clump of trees and the atmospheric grey of the brooding sky are in restful harmony with the simple dignity of the composition. The interest of the picture centers in the patch of misty light upon the meadows and the white round cloud above. We feel in this picture the influence of Inness, who was Wyant's early inspiration and who first

advised him to enter upon an artistic career.

It is related that Wyant, beholding a picture by Inness in a little Ohio town, was so completely enthralled by its art that he departed for New York with the sole purpose of consulting the master, who, upon examining the sketches of the younger man, advised him to take up painting in earnest. Both showed originality and independence in breaking away from the old school of trivial detail reproduced minutely, to a broader style of poetic subjectiveness. The effect created by their pictures is often similar by reason of the tremulous luminosity and mysterious depths of shade which characterized the works of both masters, the color of Innes being, however, richer than the more silvery tones of Wyant.

The Rapids by William Morris Hunt is another of the fine examples of our older school presented by this exhibition. It possesses all the grave charm of the best works of these early men, its restraint of color being characteristic. This is one of Hunt's Niagara studies, another of which, it will be remembered, depicting the falls themselves, sold for \$10,000 shortly after his death. "*The Rapids*," while not so stupendous a theme, is, perhaps, for that very reason, more readily accepted by the eye as pictorial, the interest of the subject not attempting to vie with or detract from the art exercised in presenting it. The painting is a fortunate acquisition from among works which are constantly becoming more scarce, very few being now left obtainable.

Among the less widely appreciated of the early men represented in this collection are George Fuller and Theodore Robinson, the one with a small landscape and the other with an almost life-size figure piece. *Bringing Home the Cows* is a somewhat obscure but fascinating study, possessing much of the charm of mystery with which gathering night enmantles the humblest scene. It is, indeed, much darker than the reproduction indicates, so that the observer peers into the shadows to distinguish the faintly defined shapes of men and animals. It is a work belonging to the best period of this sturdy New Englander after he had settled down on his Massachusetts farm in 1860, only to paint occasionally at the urge of inspiration.

Robinson might almost be styled an "artist's artist," being perhaps only fully appreciated by his fellow brushmen. *The Red Gown* achieves the difficult task of rendering pleasing a combination of shades of red and rose that the mind does not readily associate with harmony. The slim, graceful figure, clad in the red gown, has for a background the branches of a tree, a bloom with rose-colored flowers, soft indefinable tans in the grass and the branches uniting the two shades acceptably. The woman herself is



THE RED GOWN
By THEODORE ROBINSON

Courtesy Macbeth Galleries (All rights reserved)

by far, more interesting than her gown, or its redness; the slenderness of her arms, the flat, flowing contours of her uncorseted body, the fine dignity of her well-poised head with its simple, soft brown hair, are all eloquent of that best type of womanhood on which the race relies. Something about her recalls pictures of the former Mrs. Grover Cleveland as a bride, though perhaps it is only the style of the gown and the hairdressing.

Robinson was, with Twachtman, among



WOODLAND BROOK

By JOHN CARLSON

Courtesy Macbeth Galleries (All rights reserved)

the first of the American impressionists, coming under the influence of Carolus-Duran and Claude Monet, under whom he studied in Paris. At his death his fellow artists purchased one of his picture for the Metropolitan Museum. This exhibition also included two canvases by Twachtman, "*The Little Bridge*" being especially interesting as a companion picture to the one in the Minneapolis Museum.

Two great little water colors by Winslow Homer proclaimed the time-worn truth that genius is simplicity. Who but Homer could do so much with so little? Who else could have set those dark-sailed ships atremble upon silver seas against a grey mysterious distance, with such certain mastery? *Gloucester Schooners* is simplicity carried to its ultimate expression. In tone, in composition, in strokes of the brush, it is simple, yet nothing is wasted. A few essentials are so combined as to

produce the complete without seeming design or effort. The other small water-color, *Moonlit Surf*, is interesting as the original sketch for Homer's Luxembourg picture.

Strangely individual are the quiet level compositions of Sartain, whose love for flat countries and parallel lines is not unusual. There is poetry in his canvases and their titles, *Places Which Pale Passion Loves* being worthy a place among the finely turned phrases of literature. As a picture it imparts all of the quiet sentiment of reposeful monotony experienced during an evening drive through a

prairie country. We can feel the mists of evening creep over us and hear the frogs sing in the broken marshes of the wayside. The very clouds stretch across the canvas in long horizontal lines, and the color is dull and soft and quiet, yet grateful and soothing to the tired spirit.

Among other charming things in this col-



BRINGING HOME THE COWS

By GEORGE FULLER

Courtesy Macbeth Galleries (All rights reserved)

MORNING SUNLIGHT
By RICHARD MILLER

Courtesy Macbeth
Galleries (All rights reserved)



lection is a characteristic canvas by F. Ballard Williams, *The Fete in the Glen*, remarkable alike for graceful figures, agreeable color, a strong decorative quality and the sweet enchantment of scenes from the fair Arcadie of fancy.

The landscape offerings of men of the present day afford nothing perhaps more completely attuned to modern taste than the paintings of Daniel Garber, one of which, *Melting Snow*, was observed at this exhibition. Both the charm and individuality of this artist are difficult to analyze, impossible to describe, but the illustration tells the usual story of grace revealed by a Garber. He seems to know and love tree formations as one might know and love the features of dear friends. He constantly surprises with things we have noticed and

forgotten, or perhaps failed to notice and appreciate. No doubt it is because he presents so many eccentricities of horticulture, away from the more obviously lovely forms generally chosen as pictorial subjects, that we return to look at his trees again and again. In *Melting Snow* there stands a little bare tree with spiky, forky branches, rendered doubly fascinating by its reflection in the grey shadowed water. The soft and soggy snow, the flowing water and the mild, warm sky combine in a nice harmony of yellowish and pearly tone which is clear and clean and even bright in its effect.

Another delightful snow study was the *Woodland Brook* by John F. Carlson, whose Swedish blood declares itself in his masterly handling of a wintry theme. Do these men of the north really paint snow



GIRL READING
By IVAN OLINSKY

Courtesy Macbeth Galleries (All rights reserved)

with a gift endowed by some frost spirit of Norse mythology, or does romantic fancy merely find added delight in the combination of a northern name and a northern scene? One inclines to the view that they do really understand winter in all its moods better than do artists of other latitudes, and surely the *Woodland Brook* could be introduced as a clinching argument. That lovely, cold, blue light, those blue and trembling tree trunk shadows upon the soft snow, that dark cold mirror of the brook are the work of one with a supreme sentiment for his subject. This is an altogether pleasing picture, though of a kind which presents no problem beyond the grasp of the simplest lover of beauty.

Among figure studies the visitors to this exhibition will not fail to have carried away

a vivid recollection of Ivan Olinsky's *Girl Reading*. She is so fresh and young and fair, with the lazy grace of youth in her careless attitude, its glow in her rosy cheek and its sheen upon her soft, gold-brown hair. The head and hands are remarkably well painted and the bright green of the thin transparent material of the gown enhances the freshness of the flesh tones. This green is repeated in the leaves of the flowers upon the wall drapery which one might desire to be a bit less obtrusive, though they impart a certain decorative quality.

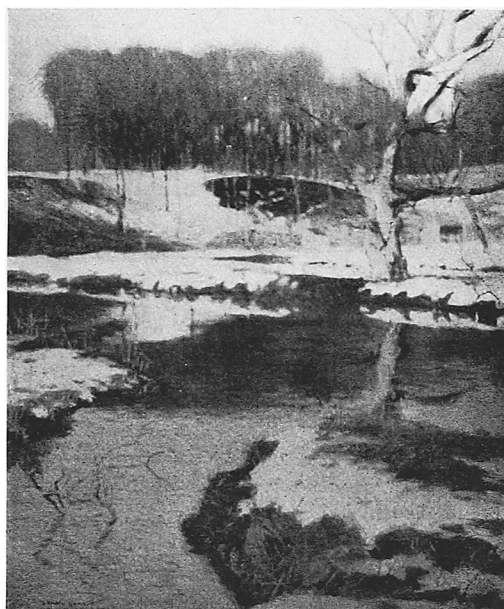
In *Morning Sunlight* by Richard E. Miller, we have something typical of present-day art with its generosity of pigment and color. Against a garden background of



THE RAPIDS
By WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT

Courtesy Macbeth Galleries (All rights reserved)

rioting leaves and flowers, in the clear sunlight reflected from yellow stucco walls, stands the graceful figure of a young woman, in a black lacy wrap, arranging gay red flowers in a vase upon the little green table of a cheerful sun parlor. The scene is fresh and bright and lively, brilliant with green and red, and golden sunshine. A peculiarity of the picture is to be noted in the fact that the face and neck and hair of the lady are painted in a much more smooth, careful and finished method than the very broad treatment of her draperies, the furniture in the foreground and the garden beyond. We notice this at a glance and feel convinced that most exponents of the modern school would have painted the face and hair with broader strokes and bolder dashes of broken pigment. Without attempting to draw comparisons unfavorable to either side, it must be admitted that the

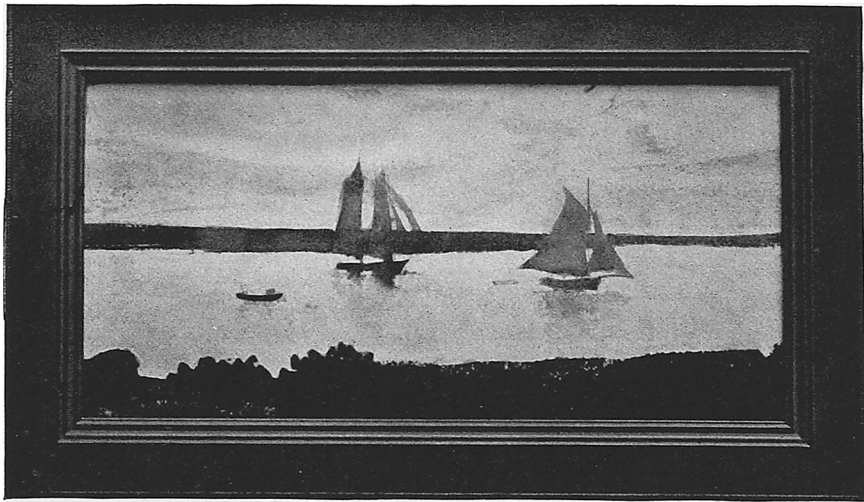


MELTING SNOW By DANIEL GARBER
Courtesy Macbeth Galleries (All rights reserved)

effect which the artist has achieved is decidedly agreeable and pleasing. Miller, indeed, is a man who has created a great deal of discussion in artistic circles at home and abroad.

Space does not permit of an extended review of all the good things offered by this exhibition. It would not, however, be possible to omit a mention of the many beautiful examples of the works of Charles W. Hawthorne included in this collection. Hawthorne is worthy of more than passing interest from the fact that his art is so dis-

tinctly national in character, his paintings of the fisherfolk about Cape Cod possessing an unmistakable individuality. Among these *Refining Oil* will be remembered for the handsome and dignified head of the elderly man and its charming contrast with the face of the young boy. Another of the Hawthorne's in this collection, entitled *Mother and Child*, reminded one strongly of his painting entitled *The Widow*, which attracted so much attention at the recent Annual Exhibition of American Art at the Art Institute.



GLOUCESTER SCHOONERS
By WINSLOW HOMER

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